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14. ABSTRACT Deliberately, but in error, the authors of AirSea Battle Concept (ASBC) did not define a specific desired end state to develop their plan to defeat People's Republic of China (PRC) aggression. Instead, the authors proposed a broad end state linked to a number of unnecessary and disadvantageous broad military objectives to keep the study as applicable to as many scenarios as possible. The predictable results from this construct were traditional obsolete and constrained ways to conduct the battle using virtually economically unconstrained traditional air and naval means. Commander, United States Pacific Command (CDRUSPACOM) should take heed of the authors' accurate assessments of current warfighting imbalances in the theater, but begin planning by defining a clear end state with the most likely scenarios - maintaining the status quo of the disputed islands of Taiwan, the Spratley Islands, and the Senkaku islands. From this end state, CDRUSPACOM can identify and abandon unnecessary lines of operation such as active Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and mainland strikes using fighter aircraft, to free up resources for currently available technology which would enhance his ability to ensure a successful defense of the islands.					
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**Through the Lens of Operational Art: Countering People's Republic of China (PRC)
Aggression in a Limited Conflict using Innovative Ways and Cost-Effective Means to
Offset PRC Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) Capabilities.**

How should Pacific Command's (PACOM) Theater Campaign Plan evolve in light of the
Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment's (CSBA) recent AirSea Battle Concept
(ASBC) proposal?

by

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Seminar 15



A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements
of the Joint Military Operations Department.

The contents of this essay reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the
Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

25 October 2010

Deliberately, but in error, the authors of AirSea Battle Concept (ASBC) did not define a specific desired end state prior to developing their plan to defeat the People's Republic of China (PRC). Instead, the authors proposed a broad end state linked to a number of unnecessary or inherently disadvantageous military objectives in an attempt to keep the study as applicable to as many scenarios as possible. The predictable results that emerged from this construct were traditional obsolete and constrained ways to conduct the battle using virtually economically unconstrained traditional air and naval means, despite their own claims to the contrary.¹ ASBC's campaign would expand the conflict beyond necessary levels by requiring the military to dominate numerous lines of operation, necessitating unrealistic levels of effort to overcome, with no assured means of victory. Because ASBC correctly identifies so many tactical and systemic problems and possible solutions, the critical proposals are lost as it fails to put significant emphasis on the few specific, currently available technologies and tactics which can help the U.S. to match current PRC advantages. Instead of accepting the military changes to the current environment and identifying specific, affordable, innovative solutions to operate within this new environment, ASBC promises unrealistic success from an unattainable level of "Jointness," in combination with many traditional ways and unproven, economically impractical means to directly counter these existing imbalances. While U.S. Navy and Air Force leadership have signed an agreement to move forward on the concepts proposed by ASBC, the services and Commander, United States Pacific Command (CDRUSPACOM) should take heed of the authors' accurate assessments of current warfighting imbalances in the theater, but not fight in the manner proposed due to its improper analysis of ends, ways, and means. Instead, planning for a conflict with the PRC needs to begin with a more specific and realistic "end." From this

desired end state, planning ought to break from traditional concepts and adapt to incorporate more innovative “ways,” and more restrained and specific “means” to accomplish U.S. policy goals in the Pacific.

Ends

Before a country goes to war, it is critical that it begin its planning at the end. U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, states that, “...strategic guidance provides long-term as well as intermediate or ancillary objectives. It should define what constitutes “victory or success (ends) and allocate adequate forces and resources (means) to achieve strategic objectives. The method (ways) of employing military capabilities to achieve the ends is for the supported JFC to develop and propose.”² In discussing war termination criterion, JP 3-0 states, “Once established, the national strategic end state and termination criteria enable development of the military strategic objectives and military end state.”³ The importance of identifying and planning for a military end state derived from the national strategic end state is immense. Vego states, “There is probably nothing worse in the conduct of strategy than a mismatch or disconnect between the ends and means.”⁴

Although ASBC does an excellent job describing the current military situation in the Western Pacific Theater of Operations (WPTO), its biggest failure is not defining a *specific* end state for CDRUSPACOM. Instead, it begins its with a *general* strategic end state, “...extending and defending democratic rule, maintaining access to key trading partners and resources, and reassuring those allies and partners who cooperate with the United States in defending common interests.”⁵ It continues with military goals, stating it “must address high-end military operations in the WPTO” and “help to *set the conditions* at the operational

level to sustain a stable, favorable conventional military balance throughout the Western Pacific region.”⁶ The authors conclude the U.S. must “sustain its ability to project sufficient power in the region to defend U.S. interests and protect its friends and allies.”⁷ Based on the doctrine referred to above, this *general* vice *specific* strategic end state risks a “mismatch or disconnect” between the ends, ways, and means to prevail in a conflict with the PRC.

Instead of planning for broad end states, CDRUSPACOM must give the most realistic guidance possible to his staff by directing planning for the most likely scenario in the WPTO – a PRC takeover of disputed islands - and incorporate a desired strategic end state of “return to the status quo” and the military end state of “preventing forcible PRC takeover of Taiwan, the Spratley islands, or the Senkaku islands.” To be fair, ASBC avoids describing a specific end state because it doesn’t want to limit its analysis. It attempts to frame a conflict against the PRC in a myriad of scenarios. But this is exactly the problem – its broadness allows for too much latitude in describing ways and means. Although it is true that a defense of the Senkaku or the Spratley islands would vary considerably from a defense of Taiwan, we *can* limit our discussion of a possible conflict with the PRC to these “most likely” scenarios.

The U.S. ought to limit its proposed strategic end state and military end states to those listed above because of its limited national interests in Taiwan, the Spratley and the Senkaku islands. A dominant victory over the PRC is neither a current nor future U.S. interest. There is no argument that these disputed locations are important national interests, but U.S. leadership should not go to war to keep Taiwan or the other island groups independent *at any cost*. Few in the United States would back a U.S. presence to discourage PRC seizure of these islands and in the instance of Taiwan; a unified China is a stated goal of the United States. The Shanghai Communiqué signed by the PRC and the United States in 1972 states,

“the Government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government in China.”⁸

The Spratleys and Senkakus are disputed by multiple entities and the U.S. does not hold a vital national interest in either – except to maintain our alliance with the Japanese and in the context of broader efforts for peace to support the current world order. Finally, this debate cannot ignore the U.S. financial situation. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen, called our national debt “the most significant threat to our national security.”⁹ Preparing *and executing* this battle for limited aims, on a slim budget, will be critical – especially because of the limited national interests the U.S. holds in these islands.

A dominant military victory which enables unfettered U.S. influence in the Western Pacific is *not* in the U.S.’s current or future interests, nor would it be sustainable. The United States is losing relative power and influence in Asia as the PRC’s influence grows – but this is to be expected with its natural geographic and demographic advantages. The English Geographer Sir Halford Mackinder, posited that “the Chinese, should they expand their power well beyond their borders, “might constitute the yellow peril to the world”’s freedom just because they would add an oceanic frontage to the resources of the great continent...”¹⁰ Therefore, when determining end state, the U.S. must be realistic about how much it can limit PRC power in the region and what relationship it desires to have with the PRC after the conflict. The U.S. is regularly reducing its financial and military influence in the region because of its financial problems but can maintain a military goal of limiting PRC ambitions by denying them their disputed maritime claims. A dominant, military battle against the PRC that economically drains the U.S. would result in a Pyrrhic victory - with the U.S. winning the battle, but losing the war when it would not be able to maintain influence in the region afterwards, accelerating the decline of U.S. influence and ceding this void to the PRC.

Failure to describe specific end states also leads to a difficult problem when planning for conflict termination. Joint Pub 3-0 states that the “development of a military end state is complementary to and supports attaining the specified termination criteria and national strategic end state.”¹¹ Failure to identify a specific end state in ASBC has resulted in a campaign design which assumes the PRC will submit to the U.S. as a result of overwhelming conventional military force. The most alarming issue with this assumption is that it commits the U.S. to the losing side of a never ending escalation. Because the PRC places a much higher value on the object in question than the U.S., the PRC will always be willing to commit more resources, resulting in the U.S. leaving the battlefield due to a political inability to justify increasing escalations. Instead, the U.S. ought to plan for ways and means that have the highest possibility of resulting in conflict termination via a negotiated settlement. Joint Pub 3-0 gives guidance on territorial disputes: “Disputes over territorial or economic advantage tend to be interest-based and lend themselves to negotiation, persuasion, and coercion. Conflicts based on ideology, ethnicity, or religious or cultural primacy tends to be value-based and reflect demands that may be more difficult to negotiate.”¹² Despite the PRC’s claims that Taiwan itself is a “vital” national interest, doctrine indicates that the disputes over these islands may be resolved via a negotiated settlement.

Some may argue there is significant “balancing” in the region occurring in response to the PRC’s rise and that the U.S.’s influence in the region is increasing, assuring the U.S. of military support from its regional allies in a conflict with the PRC. Edward Wong of the New York Times recently wrote that the U.S.’s “economic troubles have eroded its standing in a more dynamic Asia. But rising frictions between China and its neighbors...over security issues have handed the United States an opportunity to reassert itself.”¹³ Some supporters of

ASBC may argue the U.S. should be more concerned with maintaining U.S. military hegemony to maintain the current global order. Therefore, any challenge to this order is a vital national interest and requires a response with a major military effort to control China.

There is no doubt that China has significant political, economic, and demographic challenges. However, no change in political, economic or military power in the near term is likely to change the fact that a resurgent China is shifting the balance of power. In the recent May/June 2010 Foreign Affairs Journal, Robert Kaplan stated that “Simply by securing its economic needs, China is shifting the balance of power in the Eastern Hemisphere, and that must mightily concern the United States.”¹⁴ Unfortunately, two of the three island disputes discussed here are bilateral issues, limiting the transfer of current political capital from “balancing” in the region to military efforts. There is no disagreement that the interests involved here are vital to the U.S. and require an appropriate response, but not one so great that it results in a Pyrrhic victory. However, a major military effort can be undertaken here that meets required objectives without accelerating the current difficult U.S. economic situation into a more critical one. Therefore, maintaining the status quo in Taiwan, the Spratleys, and the Senkakus *is* important to maintain the current world order, but only if it does not bankrupt the U.S. in the process. This will require the U.S. to determine different ways and means than those proposed by the AirSea Battle.

WAYS

After more appropriately and specifically stating the “Ends” for this prospective campaign, CDRUSPACOM should direct planning efforts to develop the best “Ways” to accomplish the objectives associated with the End State. “Ways” is “The method of

employing military capabilities to achieve the ends.”¹⁵ ASBC accurately assesses the PRC’s capabilities, stating, “US ground, air, and naval forces have long been accustomed to operating from sanctuary...The growing Chinese A2/AD capabilities...threaten to violate these long-standing sanctuaries.”¹⁶ To address this threat, the U.S. Air Force and Navy have jointly signed on to the operational concept proposed in ASBC, believing the U.S. can defeat the PRC by using traditional ways, enhancing their lethality through a maturation in their level of “Jointness.” ASBC’s proposed campaign design is a long-term conflict to dominate all aspects of the battlespace, resulting in a degradation of PRC national and military power and subjugation to U.S. national interests. ASBC attests that a notional U.S. campaign must directly engage and dominate the PRC in each of the following lines of operation: 1. Battle network versus counter-battle network; 2. Missile attack versus missile defense; 3. Air superiority versus air defense; 4. Sea and Undersea Control versus Sea and Undersea Denial; 5. Force sustainment versus Counter-Force sustainment.¹⁷ Instead, U.S. Navy and Air Force planners ought to acknowledge the specific, limited U.S. objectives of the conflict, the associated constraints that will be allocated for their defense, and U.S. military disadvantages that cannot be overcome using traditional ways. However, USPACOM planners *can* successfully operate within these constraints by developing innovative “Ways” to fight the PRC instead of attempting to directly overcome them. U.S. planners ought to abandon or lessen reliance on two of the five competitions recommended by ASBC (Active BMD, Air Superiority over Mainland China), thereby significantly constraining our military logistic requirements, and continue focus on Sea/Undersea Control and Battle Networks/Sensors. Ceding certain lines of operation in which the U.S. maintains an inherent disadvantage makes military and economic sense for the U.S. and deprives the PRC of certain advantages. For

instance, penetrating PRC airspace is a particularly difficult effort in such a conflict; success might come at the cost of a carrier, or other significant combat losses, and even success offers little in the way of preventing PRC takeover of the islands.

Attempts at perfecting active Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) are well-intentioned. Analysis of the PRC military indicates that in this scenario, the PRC's operational military Center of Gravity (COG) is their Ballistic Missile Forces. Highly survivable, the PRC relies on these forces to do what its other military capabilities cannot: conduct long-range precision strike (LRPS) to target critical U.S. military infrastructure in the region – critical Air Ports of Departure (APODs) and Sea Ports of Departure (SPODs) and, ostensibly, carriers at sea – as well as to subdue the people of Taiwan if unable to conventionally blockade the island. ASBC states that the “PLA would conduct large-scale preemptive attacks designed to inflict severe damage on US forces based or operating in the WPTO...”¹⁸ ASBC statistics indicate the PRC has hundreds of missiles capable of hitting Taiwan and Okinawa, and dozens of missiles capable of striking U.S. air and naval bases in Japan and Guam to accomplish just that.¹⁹ The PRC simply cannot achieve its objectives without its missile forces. However, active BMD is not a cost-effective effort versus the PRC - several authors and studies have underscored the ineffectiveness and soaring costs of these systems. George N. Lewis and Theodore A. Postol state that “...the NPR (Nuclear Posture Review) incorrectly assumes that existing missile defenses are so robust and reliable that they can actually be used to compensate for losses in our deterrent posture...” continuing, “if the United States and its allies make plans to depend upon missile defenses that don't work, it could ultimately have enormous consequences for our mutual security.”²⁰ CDRUSPACOM ought to abandon reliance on active BMD efforts in this scenario, sending a signal to the

DoD to reduce robust pursuit of more advanced active BMD capability. Abandoning reliance on these efforts to protect U.S. military forces and civilian population centers will save the U.S. large amounts of money and begin its evolution to future battle. Instead of assuming invulnerable missile defense and making few changes in defense, Japan and Taiwan can transition to efforts aimed at enduring missile attacks and CDRUSPACOM can focus on innovative methods to complicate targeting and conduct operations. To survive, U.S. forces can reduce presence at forward bases, implement deception techniques to degrade targeting, and change operating patterns to reduce vulnerability to attack.

Attempting to gain air superiority or perform targeting using manned aircraft over the PRC mainland in this conflict is unnecessary and not in line with maintaining the status quo. Instead, U.S. forces ought to maintain the capability to deny the airspace in the vicinity of Taiwan, the Senkaku islands, or the Spratley islands to deny the Chinese the ability to drop large amounts of inexpensive aircraft ordnance on the island. There will be great difficulties in generating large sortie counts from aircraft carriers targeted by the PRC's anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) or permanent airfields in the region, also targeted by ballistic missiles. Even should high sortie generation be accomplished, there would be significant difficulties in penetrating the PRC's robust air defense systems and locating viable targets. The accuracy of attacks by PRC ballistic missiles should instead be minimized by denial and deception techniques; and attacks by PRC manned aircraft and standoff weapons should be thwarted using surface to air missile systems designed to shoot down cruise missiles on or around the island. Reconnaissance and surveillance could be undertaken by continental U.S.-based long range aircraft and the few necessary mainland strikes against force projection

platforms could be performed by SSGNs. This concept of operations would minimize the use of fighter aircraft from aircraft carriers and air force bases, significantly reducing cost.

The logistical effort proposed by ASBC is based on current U.S. logistics doctrine which assumes unchallenged supply lines supplying large numbers of forces with large amounts of ordnance. The magnitude and vulnerability of combat logistics would be diminished once active BMD and air superiority over mainland PRC are eliminated as major LOOs. However, the U.S. will still need to stockpile necessary ordnance and supplies in various hardened, deeply buried locations accessible to those few forces (mostly submarines) requiring resupply in this conflict and develop ways to conduct rearming and resupply missions using platforms and lighterage we currently possess. One such technique would be to simply use large numbers of old cargo ships to resupply Taiwan in a blockade, complicating the PRC's targeting process and forcing the enemy to expose vital platforms (submarines, surface ships) to expend limited, critical ordnance (torpedoes, ballistic missiles) to destroy an endless supply of ships worth very little.²¹ Theater Security Cooperation will pay great dividends here. Warfighting contributions from countries in the region will probably be minimal, but logistics support will be critical – especially to the resupply of Taiwan and the few, small remaining bases in the region. While the U.S. ought to develop concepts of operation to resupply from U.S. military facilities in the region, it should also utilize alliances to covertly resupply ships, aircraft and submarines at friendly ports, creating the maximum number of resupply points, further complicating PRC targeting.

Supporters of ASBC would argue that that each of these territorial disputes are value-based and that only manned aircraft attacking large numbers of targets could bring about an end to the conflict. James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara seemingly agree. Regarding

Chinese feelings on the islands lost in the late 19th Century, they assessed that “Chinese nationalists are determined to banish memories of past affronts. While the 19th Century may be ancient history to us, it lives vividly in Beijing.”²² ASBC advocates would also counter that the U.S. must destroy PRC missiles and missile launchers, due to the damage these missiles will inflict on Taiwan and U.S. forces. To prevent this, a major effort to perfect missile defense and dominate airspace over mainland China to attack ballistic missile launchers (and therefore, a significant logistics effort, as well) is necessary.

It is true that the PRC places a great deal of value on who rules over Taiwan. But Taiwan also places a great deal of value on their own self-rule. Because of these competing interests, the U.S. should fully expect that this more limited conflict could transition to a long-term struggle with an unpredictable mode of conflict termination – but that does not mean the PRC would not be amenable to a negotiated settlement when denied their objective. Therefore, the answer is not to increase the level of effort necessary to bring the PRC to capitulate; instead, it is even more critical for the U.S. to be realistic about the appropriate level of effort it should spend in obtaining victory – and ensure this is not surpassed. Staying engaged in a limited conflict beyond its proper level of effort can significantly weaken a nation. Therefore, CDRUSPACOM should plan to terminate this conflict via a negotiated settlement and avoid the temptation to “throw everything he has” at this problem. Taiwan would likely still be able to withstand a great deal of destruction without an active ballistic missile defense shield and the inability to target Chinese ballistic missiles in mainland China. Emotional arguments for active BMD to protect civilians do not change the fact that current capabilities are poor and U.S. fighter aircraft would likely have a difficult time generating large numbers of sorties and be limited in their ability to find these mobile systems while

simultaneously defending against the Chinese air defense system. Instead, efforts could be focused on degrading China's targeting of facilities in Taiwan and developing the capability to retaliate in similar fashion (using conventional ballistic missiles) for deterrence.

MEANS

The Means identified by ASBC to defeat the PRC in the Western Pacific would put an unnecessary financial burden on the U.S. that is not in line with the value afforded the object – Taiwan, the Spratley islands, or Senkaku islands. ASBC puts a premium on developing new, expensive, highly technological platforms and munitions aimed at trying to completely eliminate enduring military imbalances. In addition to the unbelievable developmental costs associated with these new capabilities; the costs associated with large numbers of mainland China strikes (high sortie rates, expected high aircraft loss rates, high precision munitions expenditures, and long distances) is a significant financial burden as well. Instead, CDRUSPACOM ought to state his objectives to defend these disputed islands without new platforms and limited new capabilities, *reducing* his requirements for active BMD and significant penetration of mainland China. In stating his requirement for survivable platforms and weapons in a defense of Taiwan scenario, he should state his preference for using currently available submarines to perform both sea control and limited strike roles. In doing so, CDRUSPACOM could have a significant impact on the U.S. Navy and Air Force's acquisition process.

Despite widespread concern regarding the expense, effectiveness, and utility of these new technologies, ASBC recommends "The Air Force and Navy should jointly assess potential tactical air-based BMD systems such as the Air-Launched Hit-to-Kill (ALHK)

concept...”²³ and “long-range next-generation low-observable air platforms...and payloads for these platforms, including precision-guided strike weapons, ISR sensors, advanced air-to-air missiles, decoys of various kinds, electronic attack systems and eventually, directed-energy weapons.”²⁴ These programs represent *significant* unnecessary investments in development. The predecessors of these technologies (i.e. active BMD and Stealth), have already received significant investment but are already countered by PRC capabilities.²⁵ DoD invests 9.42 billion dollars *per year* in active BMD, with little return on the investment to date after decades of research, as noted by numerous critics.²⁶ One attempt to use technology to penetrate Chinese air defenses, the Stealth Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program, is currently 65% over budget at a total of \$382 billion dollars.²⁷ Savings from programs such as these could fund a number of platforms that would positively impact the mission in the WPTO. To illustrate the amount of money this figure represents, just the amount of the JSF program’s *overrun* (\$248 billion dollars), *so far*, could fund sixty-two Virginia class submarines at \$2 billion dollars a copy²⁸ and operate (at the same annual cost as an AEGIS destroyer)²⁹ for twenty years at about \$100 million dollars a year.³⁰

CDRUSPACOM, as a Combatant Commander (CCDR), is often perceived as subject to the capabilities provided by force providers: the U.S. Navy and Air Force. However, he is not devoid of input and plays an important role in determining what platforms he receives and what platforms the services purchase. JP 5-0 lists “identifying required resources” and “Advising the CJCS and SecDef of other agencies” capabilities desired or required for OPLAN execution”³¹ are part of a CCDR’s planning responsibilities. After adapting the desired end state and ways in which he would deter PRC aggression in the WPTO, CDRUSPACOM should update the services on these changes and adapt his input regarding

the capabilities he desires to accomplish assigned tasking in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP). Reducing reliance on active BMD and eliminating penetration of Chinese airspace using manned aircraft could undercut support for these costly and ineffective initiatives, spurring serious debate about what capabilities would be more effective.

Due to CDRUSPACOM's reduced requirements for strikes on mainland China and active BMD, the U.S. Navy and Air Force would have to logically restructure not only its acquisition priorities, but also the numbers and types of assets in the theater. Although the requirement for aircraft carriers and fighter aircraft to conduct strikes against mainland China would be significantly reduced or eliminated, their utility in the theater would still be extremely useful. They would still retain significant capability for sea control missions in the Senkaku and Spratley island disputes (where the target island is farther away from PRC A2AD strengths), as well as other scenarios in the PACOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). However, a significant justification for the large numbers of these platforms is probably based on the requirement to conduct strikes against mainland PRC. Therefore, the overall numbers of these assets would have to be reconsidered, even if one carrier is still retained as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) in Japan. The elimination of just this single requirement may not provide the impetus for a reduction in overall Naval and Air Force assets *right now* because of other contingencies in the world, but it would be an acknowledgement of increasing A2AD capabilities, portending future changes in the force when components of this defense system are exported and other CCDRs do the same.

The single platform that CDRUSPACOM will need more of to defeat the PRC would be submarines. The submarine is the one platform whose survivability and performance remains high despite the PRC's increasing capabilities, providing the bulk of the effort to

gain sea control and strike missions for CDRUSPACOM. The Chinese themselves believe their submarine and anti-submarine warfare forces to be vastly inferior to the U.S. submarine force.³² As discussed earlier, the U.S. cannot rely on foreign submarines to augment the submarine force because of the bilateral nature of two of the three disputed island scenarios we are planning for. As the PRC continues to build more submarines, the U.S.'s qualitative advantage could be overcome by PRC submarine quantity. In this instance, the U.S. could extend the service life of current submarines or purchase more Virginia class attack submarines already being built, eliminating high developmental costs that make up the bulk of most new acquisitions. An SSGN conversion program to convert four SSBN's to fire conventional ballistic missiles could cost a similar amount to the previous SSGN conversion program that occurred in the early 2000s, which totaled only \$3.56 billion.³³ This would result in a substantial capability to strike the few heavily defended PRC targets necessary to limit their power projection capability.

Although the U.S. already has most of the platforms it needs to successfully counter PRC aggression, it does need to acquire a few new weapons to remain relevant. Refusing to develop weapons to gain parity with advances made by other nations, DoD has consistently invested a great deal of money and time to develop weapons that can overcome the opponent's advantage. As a result, the U.S. has fallen behind in certain weapons system while waiting for the "better" solution. Instead, the U.S. ought to leverage currently available technology to match PRC capabilities right now. For instance, a conflict with the PRC will still require small numbers of precision strikes on mainland China. The greatest difficulty with targeting these facilities is the probable obsolescence of U.S. weapons versus the PRC's highly capable, mobile air defense network designed to shoot down U.S. cruise

missiles.³⁴ Therefore, the U.S. ought to convert some nuclear ballistic missiles to conventional ballistic missiles and develop survivable, advanced cruise missiles for converted SSGNs to conduct strikes. As discussed in ASBC, treaty prevents the U.S. from using conventionally-armed ballistic missiles, but the Russians desire out of this treaty as much as the U.S. A diplomatic boon here could produce a military windfall and significantly enhance U.S. Long Range Precision Strike. In addition, a next-generation cruise missile (like India's BrahMos)³⁵ could significantly enhance U.S. sea control or land attack efforts.

Some may argue that the elimination of the requirement to attack large numbers of mainland targets in China threatens the viability of the U.S. aircraft carrier and fighter aircraft. As symbols of national power, we must continue to resource them to have continued standing around the world. Plus, the addition of hundreds of advanced ballistic and cruise missiles to the theater could cause an unfavorable reaction from the PRC.

U.S. airpower is, and will continue to be a symbol of America's global power for some time, but it has become too vulnerable to operate directly against Chinese A2AD capabilities. It would be foolish to continue funding approaches to warfare that are ineffective, unnecessary, or unaffordable. The sooner the U.S. accepts the increasing vulnerability of the carrier and airpower, the earlier the services can transition to operations in this new environment and develop ways to stay ahead as it proliferates. While a danger exists that the PRC could negatively react to the addition of missiles in the WPTO, it is by far a more dangerous course of action to allow the PRC to maintain the advantage they have already created. An increase in U.S. capability would serve as a strong deterrent, instead of allowing our weakness to embolden the PRC to seize one of the disputed islands.

As discussed earlier, ASBC is a monumental contribution to finding the solution to our current position in East Asia. It possesses a number of solid proposals to solve the problem in the WPTO. However, it does lack the foundation of a realistic end state which drives the level of our effort. Derived from a faulty general end state, it also lacks focus on innovative ways and economically feasible means to defeat PRC A2AD, instead listing multiple ineffective, counterproductive methods to bring about conflict resolution. A realistic understanding of the U.S.'s current position in the region and the PRC's growing influence, combined with a more focused analysis of innovative ways and means can give the U.S. a more sensible and successful plan for defeating PRC aggression in the near future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CDRUSPACOM should:

- Adopt a realistic end state for conflict planning related to PRC aggression, based on maintaining the status quo in the defense of the disputed islands of Taiwan, the Spratley islands, and the Senkaku islands.
 - Plan defense of disputed islands utilizing limited mainland China strikes and without reliance on active BMD capabilities.
 - Reduce requirements for fighter aircraft to conduct strikes on mainland China and active BMD assets in the defense of disputed islands.
 - Request increasing numbers of attack submarines in WPTO and conversion of four SSBNs to SSGNs, making them capable of launching conventional ballistic missiles.
 - Increase requirements for more survivable munitions using currently available technology (conventional ballistic and supersonic cruise missiles) to enhance ability to gain/maintain sea control and conduct mainland China strikes.
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NOTES

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see bibliography.)

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- ²⁴ Van Tol et al., *AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Operational Concept*, 83.
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